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DEPARTMENT FOR IO, G/TIP

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SUBJECT: UN TO COMMEMORATE BICENTENNIAL OF END OF SLAVE  
TRADE

¶1. In plenary session on October 20, The UN General Assembly (UNGA) received the Secretary-General's report on the Follow-up to the Commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (A/63/213), and passed a resolution on a Permanent Memorial to and Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (A/63/L.5). UNGA President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann gave the keynote; "We must identify modern forms of slavery and combat them and eradicate them from the planet." Subsequent interventions focused more on inherited grievances than on taking action against modern slavery. UNGA heard from representatives of Guyana, Kenya, Jamaica, Cuba, Morocco, Ghana, the United States, Russia, the Bahamas and India.

¶2. Building a Memorial: D'Escoto noted that March 25 is now the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, marking the end of the slave trade in the British Empire in 1807. On behalf of the Caribbean states, Guyanese CDA George Talbot reiterated calls for construction a monument at the New York UN Headquarters and invited Member States to contribute to the Permanent Memorial Fund. Delegations expressed support. Jamaica chairs the ad-hoc monument committee and thanked the following countries for their donations and pledges: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Botswana, Brazil, Denmark, Indonesia, Haiti, Luxembourg, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Surinam, Syria, Turkey, and the UK. The Jamaican PermRep emphasized that all expenses are to be covered by these voluntary contributions.

¶3. Discussing some of the still-existing consequences of the slave trade, d'Escoto listed "neocolonialism, systems of discrimination, economic inequalities, and the demands of multilateral organizations to hand over reserves and natural resources in payment for interest on an immoral external debt." D'Escoto calls for "material, moral and ethical compensation." The Cuban representative called for descendants of slaves and indigenous peoples to "receive the reparation and the compensation they deserve, as an outstanding measure of historical justice." No other delegations jumped on this rhetorical bandwagon.

¶4. Moroccan Deputy PermRep Hamid Chabar encouraged cultural dialogue. The U.S. Mission cited the civil war and the 13th Amendment to end the "despicable practice" and focused remarks on continuing these efforts by combating contemporary slavery, i.e. trafficking in persons. Remarks are available at the Mission's web site, [www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov](http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov).

¶5. Co-sponsors included the United States, Jamaica and the Bahamas. At the end of the debate, UNGA VP Siles (acting for d'Escoto) announced additional co-sponsors, including Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Croatia, Fiji, Finland, France, Greece, Honduras, Iran, Iraq, Micronesia, Monaco, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Samoa, Serbia, Slovenia, Thailand, Macedonia, Turkey, United States, and

Uruguay. At the end of the debate, the Cape Verdean representative insisted that all African states should be co-sponsors. Silas affirmed that the record will reflect the Cape Verdean remarks. The resolution passed by consensus with no contrary opinions expressed.

Khalilzad